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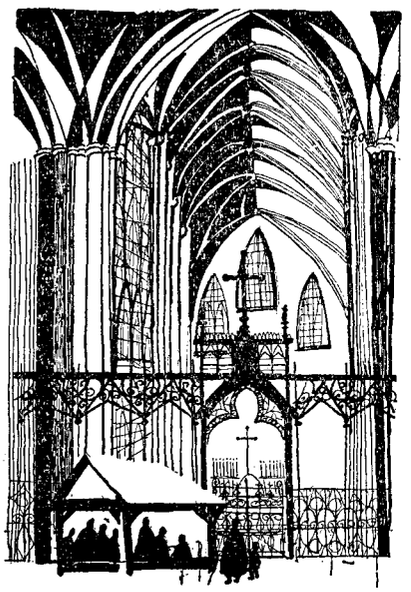
The Decisive Mr. Truman
—William V. Shannon

THE

Commonweal



CHRISTMAS: ANNO DOMINI 1955

by H. A. Reinhold

Alice Saxon Thomas Merton John A. Lynch

Richard Hayes Philip T. Hartung

Frederick D. Wilhelmsen J. L. Maddux R. P. Mohan

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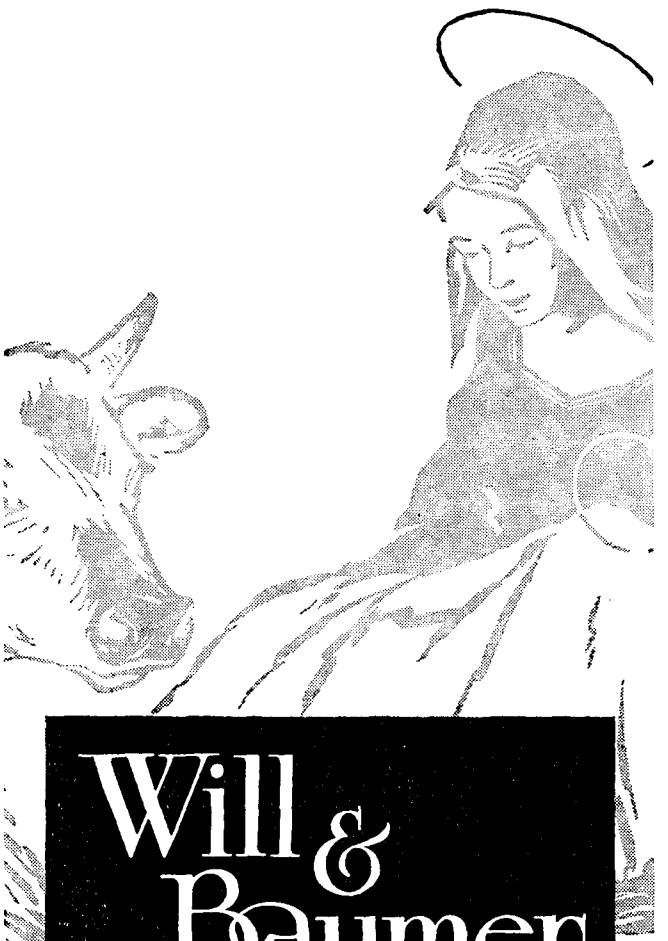
And she brought forth her firstborn son,
and wrapped him in swaddling
clothes, and laid him in a
manger, because there was no
room for them in the inn.
St. Luke 2:7



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THE COMMONWEAL
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The Commonweal

week by week

NO ROOM

AS the Christian world moved solemnly toward the celebration of Christmas, a ritual of a different sort was under way in Washington. There a Senate subcommittee under Senator Harley M. Kilgore of West Virginia was holding public hearings on the immigration policies embodied in the McCarran-Walter Act. And like people carrying out set parts in a familiar play, various witnesses said much what was expected of them.

Senator Herbert Lehman of New York, the foremost sponsor of legislation to liberalize the immigration laws, denounced the present Act, as he often has before. Victor Reuther of the CIO said that the quota system now in effect favors countries like Great Britain and Ireland to the disadvantage of the nations of southern and eastern Europe like Italy and Greece. Senator Clifford P. Case of New Jersey urged changes aimed at "removing the senseless and serious discrimination against nationalities of southern and southeastern Europe." The Rev. Dr. Eugene C. Blake, president of the National Council of the Churches of Christ, asked for liberalization of the present laws. Father William J. Gibbons, S.J., speaking for the National Catholic Welfare Conference, urged that the annual quota be raised from 150,000 to 250,000. Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts, cosponsor with Senator Lehman of liberalizing legislation, attacked present U. S. immigration policy as "the most blatant piece of discrimination in the nation's history," describing the national origins quota system as a method which "permits immigration to this country by those who do not wish to do so while it denies that right to those who have both the need and the desire."

Such sentiments have often been expressed about the McCarran-Walter Act since it first became law —frequently, indeed, by the very same people. For this reason there was a note of the familiar ritual about the recent proceedings in Washington; the advocates of change testified because of deep convictions, but many did not seem to have much real hope that anything would come of it all. And for this no one could blame them. They have learned from bitter personal experience how hard it is to interest people in changing U. S. immigration policies.

The reasons for the criticism of our immigration law are not hard to find. Under the present system, for example, Britain and Northern Ireland have an annual quota of more than sixty-five thousand persons—a total they neither want nor need; in the last fiscal year less than twenty thousand immigrants arrived from these nations. And while this quota went unfilled, Greece had a quota of only 308, although thousands of able-bodied young Greeks are anxious to come here. Italy desperately needs a larger allotment, but while neither Ireland nor Great Britain has used its full quota even once in the last twenty-five years, Italy's yearly quota is less than six thousand.

THE system which bears such strange fruit was born in the years immediately after World War I, when many Americans believed that the new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe were racially inferior to those from "Anglo-Saxon" or "Nordic" countries. Such racist notions were completely without scientific basis, of course, and the decades since have given them the lie. Italians, Greeks, and Poles and all the other peoples from southern and eastern Europe become just as good Americans as anyone else, as our history demonstrates. Yet the prejudices that were originally incarnated in legislation immediately after the first world war unfortunately continue in effect in our present law.

When the McCarran-Walter Act was first passed, President Truman vetoed it, and it eventually became law only over his protest. President Eisenhower has spoken strongly against it, promising changes because of what he termed "serious and inequitable restrictions." The 1956 platforms of both major political parties will probably contain

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pledges in favor of drastic revisions of the present law, and during the Presidential campaign ahead, U. S. immigration policies will continue to be deplored and denounced. Yet, aside from a few minor changes in the next session of Congress, no great improvement in present immigration policy seems likely unless more public support is forthcoming, and soon.

In his testimony for NCWC, Father Gibbons favored boosting the annual total of permitted immigration from 150,000 to 250,000. We concur, heartily; the present limitation is far below this country's capacity for absorbing newcomers, to their benefit and ours. But it should be emphasized that not even 150,000 come into the country under the present system; because of unfilled quotas from countries like Great Britain, only a little more than ninety thousand immigrants actually arrived under the regular quota system during the fiscal year just passed.

One easy way to change the present law would be to shift the basis of calculation from 1920 population figures to 1950; this would have the effect of increasing to some extent the quotas of nations against whom the discrimination was originally aimed. Another simple change would make present quotas transferable—to give Italy and Greece next year, for example, the additional number of immigrants that Great Britain and Ireland do not send this year. But although many changes are possible, none will be accomplished without a change in spirit. As things stand right now, the children of immigrants, living in a nation made great by immigration, seem to be behaving in this matter like the dog in the manger. But for a nation as blessed as this one is, it is scandalous to tell immigrants that there is no room for them in the inn.

NEXT WEEK

MARTIN TURNELL writes about the discovery and nature of Proust's early novel.

"Our age is often called an age of criticism. It might with even greater truth be called an age of research. There never was an age with such a passion for digging up the literary remains—the letters, diaries, memoirs, juvenilia and early drafts—of famous authors. . . . It is a strange thing that in such an age an early work by a European master running to some three hundred thousand words should have remained undiscovered for nearly thirty years. Yet this is precisely what happened to Proust."

A TESTING OF OUR ALLIANCE

WHEN the Soviet Union instituted their economic blockade of Berlin of several years ago, their object was a rather general one. They wanted to assert their strength, to show that they alone were in command of the situation, to spread the feeling throughout Germany and Europe that it was futile to oppose Russian wishes. Our spectacular air-lift, which kept that metropolis supplied with essentials for many months also greatly sustained German and European morale. Since then lesser blocks and threats have been recurrent.

The latest difficulties in Berlin appear to have a more specific object. The first step is to wrest as much diplomatic recognition as possible for the East German puppet regime. The aim is to win sufficient recognition to block any reunification of Germany along the lines set forth by the Adenauer Government. There is no let-up to the assertion of East Germany's new "sovereignty." It is ironical that this constitutes the burden of Soviet propaganda in a land into which many of the Communist leaders had to be imported, three hundred thousand Soviet troops are stationed to maintain order and prevent further uprisings, and Russian officers honeycomb the smaller body of East German "People's Police." Despite all this propaganda, it was the Soviet rather than the East German authorities that recently released the two American GI's in Berlin.

Setting up blocks along the various arteries to Berlin is an attempt to exact *de facto* recognition of East German authorities—from Western Germany and from all those countries trading with Berlin. The only way to meet such pressures is unyielding firmness. The United States should keep on refusing to treat with anyone on East Germany but the USSR. We should back Chancellor Adenauer's and Foreign Minister Brentano's warnings on recognition to the other nations to the hilt. The Soviets are alert for any signs of weakening or indifference. If the NATO Powers recognize the seriousness of this threat (not to mention the danger of an incident) and act firmly in concert here, these Soviet Berlin probes will backfire. Otherwise, on top of the failures at Geneva, they will constitute a growing peril to the West.

TELEVISED COURTROOMS

EXCEPT for racial cases in the South, American courts manage to provide a rather consistent approximation of justice much of the time. Normally the accused obtains a fair hearing before

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a jury of his local peers. This is not to say that efforts to improve our judiciary system should not be encouraged. But there was widespread anxiety —as well as some wickedly partisan delight— over the news a few weeks back of the clinical wire-tapping of a Wichita, Kansas, jury-room.

The first murder trial to be televised has now been terminated at Waco, Texas, with the meting out of a life sentence. Does the innovation of bringing before a wide public the spectacle of a man actually on trial for his life or liberty tend to strengthen judicial processes and foster greater respect for law and order in our land?

One of the main new elements is the increase of psychological pressure on the various witnesses. At Waco there were microphones and a TV camera in the background which comprised a new intimidating element. Under such scrutiny many a witness of the less brash sort would be so affected by his awareness of a vast unseen audience as to be rendered incapable of doing justice to his side of a case. Moreover, all sorts of potential witnesses would be fearful about coming forward with pertinent evidence if that meant being televised and therefore later remembered in person. Use of TV for criminal trials could well impede disclosures of the relevant facts.

As a deterrent to crime this innovation is even more dubious. It would spur morbid curiosity of the sort to which our tabloids pander. It would be about as effective in raising, or sustaining, moral standards as the more lurid newspaper treatment of sex and violence. Televising of criminal trials would seem to represent a throwback to the days when the execution of criminals provided greatly savored and excitedly celebrated public spectacles. Actual criminal courts are singularly inappropriate for entertainment purposes. By presenting them on TV the common well-being is badly served.

THE GREAT DEBATE

THE discussion provoked by the recent AFL-CIO merger almost broke the natural rules of debating. For in a debate there is the debatable question and the opposing sides to debate it. But at the labor convention there seemed to be only one side constantly, insistently agreeing, with no opposition, to a question that was never really formulated.

A labor organization with 15,000,000 members is impressive. If it were able to act as a single political unit it would be highly effective. This was the possibility that President Eisenhower openly recognized when he cautioned the new federation to safeguard the political rights of its members. This possibility provided the weak basis for the intemperate attacks of Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona.

While defending themselves from attacks, both Mr. George Meany, president of the AFL-CIO, and Mr. Walter Reuther, head of the new industrial union department, maintained that the federation had a right to intensified political activity. They stressed, however, that such activity would be designed to aid not labor alone but the entire citizenry. These were the expected exchanges, in the style to which we have become accustomed. The issue seemed to be settled without the debatable question being formed. The votes of the union members would have to be won by Democrats or Republicans as are the votes of other citizens.

But Mr. Charles R. Sligh, Jr., board chairman of the National Association of Manufacturers, accomplished what no one else had. He brought what he regarded as a dark, ugly question out into the open. In a prepared address he voiced a fear that the AFL-CIO would become a ghost government. Mr. Meany retorted angrily, "If we can't act as unions to defend our rights, then there is no answer but to start a labor party." And that was the question that had hovered over the convention, that had been felt by people in and out of the union—a Labor Party.

Mr. Meany's response points less to a real possibility—we do not think the U. S. will have a labor party soon, if ever—than to the way in which the union will react. Those politicians who try to make political hay out of Mr. Meany's comment will have a lean harvest. He has indicated only that the federation is not to be taken lightly. But it will exist within our two-party system; Democrats and Republicans alike must vie for labor votes. Senate GOP leader Knowland, eager to become a Presidential candidate, points the lesson. After he attended the NAM convention he told the press that he disagreed with many of his Republican colleagues. He said that the labor merger was not, of course, a political danger. We think that on this matter Senator Knowland's view is correct and that an increasing number of political candidates will see the AFL-CIO as he does.

POLITICS AND PRUDENCE

A HARD choice faced the U. S. during the present session of the UN General Assembly. After much deliberation, our delegation decided to accept the "package deal" suggested by Canada as the only practical means of making the UN

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more universal and, at the same time, adding to the strength of the "freedom bloc" by admitting to the UN important nations which had hitherto been barred by Russia's free-swinging use of the veto. A price, of course, had to be paid: five Soviet satellites, neatly packed, came with the thirteen free countries which we wanted in the UN.

Few Americans, least of all those within our UN delegation, will be tempted to regard our acceptance of all eighteen new members as either a smashing diplomatic coup for the U. S. or as the spelling out into practice of a noble idealism in our approach to international problems. We are accepting a "package deal," which means that we are settling, not for the ideally best solution, but for the best compromise we can get under the circumstances.

To many persons, of course, the very words *deal* and *compromise* connote either moral abdication or moral blindness. Thus Senator Knowland has recently decried the decision to accept the five Soviet satellites into the UN as "a retreat from principle," and several responsible sectors of the secular and religious press have added their voices to his. As a result, there is now a small but strong counter-chorus which terms the action of the U. S. delegation "immoral" and a yielding to the pressure of "expediency."

Such charges usually flow from an approach to political realities which is as simplistic as it is sincere. But politics is the art of the possible, whether its arena of exercise be the town hall or the UN, and the simple choice between black and white is seldom given. If politics were primarily an intellectual adventure among ideal absolutes, then sincerity and moral sensitivity would be sufficient equipment for the statesman. But politics is the practical effort to adjust means to ends in a complex, imperfect world. It therefore often means, no matter how regrettably, the painful choice of what seems to be the lesser of two evils.

In this world of mingled good and evil, of varying shades of gray, sincerity and moral sensitivity are not enough. Political prudence, which must not be confused with either amorality or cynicism, is absolutely indispensable in the world of politics, just as the moral virtue of prudence is indispensable in the inner world of each man's conscience.

Political prudence implies memory of the past and understanding of the present, as well as a concern for the future. It recognizes a "good deal" when one is presented, even if it means allowing the cockle to grow along with the wheat. It is in the context of political prudence that our country's acceptance of the Soviet's five cipher-nations should be judged.

THE "GIFTED" CHILD

THE gifted child may soon have his day in college. The attention which for so long has been given to the "problem" child may soon be his. Two factors seem to operate in his favor: first, the lack of schoolrooms and teachers imposes a selectivity which will almost necessarily act in his favor; second, the felt need for our country at least to equal the Soviet Union in training scientists and engineers has led to several programs designed to encourage the bright student to enter technical fields. The range of suggested programs is impressive. Their very variety emphasizes not only present problems, but serious past omissions.

Governor Harriman of New York recently advocated a Federal scholarship program which would allow qualified high school students who need financial aid to go to college. He said that Russia extended the privilege of higher education to those with special talents while we allow selection to depend too heavily on the accidents of family income. Because Federal aid to education poses several thorny problems, the Governor's proposal will remain, for some time, academic. But the State Education Department of New York has already adopted a five-point program which stresses the value of the gifted student. It subordinates scholarships to a system of teaching that will give the gifted child a more difficult course of study than is given to the average student. This program, although it is extended to gifted students with various interests, also reveals the pressure of our times by its emphasis on the scientific and technical.

One of the most interesting of our educational programs comes from neither Federal or State aid but from the independent Ford Fund for the Advancement of Education. In an effort to encourage and develop what is best in a manpower reserve that has been long neglected, the Fund-sponsored project goes into Southern high schools, searches for bright Negro students, guides them in their choice of schools and helps to pay for part of their expenses. The supplementary scholarships provided are often the difference between a complete college education and none at all.

These programs, tentative or actualized, sponsored by Federal, State or independent organizations, result in some measure from the two unpleasant facts of educational shortages and political pressures. It is one of the anomalies of our present "state of abundance" that we need such urgent pressures before we extend our best efforts to develop our intellectual resources.

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Christmas: Anno Domini 1955

"OUR HISTORICAL SITUATION IS ONE OF GREAT EMBARRASSMENT FOR CHRISTENDOM"

H. A. REINHOLD

IN the stream of our Christmas consciousness there are visible currents that never seem to mix. I have seen great rivers merge in the same wide bed, one brown and muddy, the other green and crystal clear, and I saw them flow side by side without mingling until I lost sight of the river. This seems to be the case with our ideas of Christmas: there is the current of the Christmas feast as a bonanza to merchants. It starts with "jingle bells" in October, street lighting in November, carols at any time after Thanksgiving, the red-nosed reindeer in December, and good old, jolly, pot-bellied Santa Claus—Wodan-Thor—on Christ's Birthday.

There is in the same river bed the current of the Christmas of cribs, Advent wreaths, premature carol singing, wrapped gifts, confession and Holy Communion at Midnight Mass, violin solo, shepherd music and all that. This current flows side by side with the merchants' in the river bed of man's mind and emotions. Its best products are baskets of food for the poor and the invitation to a turkey dinner for the lonely.

Then there is the cool and limpid current that runs in the liturgy where Christ-Mass and Epiphany assume imperial and purple color. It is the place of paradox—in the colloquial sense of the word—where such grandiose realities as the first chapters of John and Hebrews, Isaias 60, and the royal Psalm 71, are matched with the narrative of Jesus' birth and the gentle tone of St. Paul's letter to Titus. The very composition of texts and their selection shows the gift for majesty and grandeur. And all this is set against the background of Christ's final triumph in his Second Coming, the great Advent of the Lord, his "Presence—Parousia."

I have no doubt which of these three currents is the most authentic, comprehensive and real. Its very subtlety and majesty are the reasons for its submersion by the other currents, even though it gives its name to the great river of Nativity. It will always be difficult for the "masses" of Catholics to comprehend the complex and subtle meaning of the Christmas liturgy and to assimilate it. As a matter of fact, its fate of submersion and oblivion so shortly after it was established is proof that not even the spiritually minded, especially the mystically devout, ever really understood it. The second current, centering on "the Crib" is the one that has appealed to them, and, in its grosser form, to the ordinary faithful. Yet we should do our best to preserve it and to hand it on to future generations, never tiring in our efforts to spread its earnestness and its realness in opposition to the more sentimental, dreamy moods in which we ordinarily find ourselves facing the feast of the Nativity.

While the mystically-minded devout relish the feelings of sympathy with the divine Babe shivering in his crib and barely warmed by the warm animal breath of the legendary ox and ass, the undercurrent, the bass motif, of the Coming and Presence should make the Feast of the Nativity a feast of soul searching. For the great earnestness of Christmas is not only in the Second Coming, in the call for repentance by John the Baptist and Isaias through Advent, but also in the meaning of the stable outside Bethlehem. The past historical event is *kerygma,* "a message to contemporaries," if we would but listen; *kerygma* is a word to the heart of man in his present historical situation.

OUR historical situation at this Christmastide is one of great embarrassment for Christendom. Not only are we stubbornly and scandalously divided among ourselves, but we are mercilessly and coldly sitting at the banquet table while outside our comfortable house Lazarus lies, covered with sores and hungry. To tell him, in the shape of the Negro, the Andes Indian, the South African miner, the Moroccan and the "disinherited" that the story ends with Dives in hell and Lazarus in Abraham's bosom is no help to Dives, who happens to be the follower of Christ in this case.

The poor Jesus was born in a stable let to His

Father Reinhold is the pastor of St. Joseph's Church, Sunnyside, Washington, and a leader of the liturgical movement in the U. S.

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parents or occupied by them in their distress without the owner's permission. We are all familiar with the Biblical account and the lore added by more than sixty generations of Christians—too familiar, as a matter of fact, to be perturbed by it. The Christian is now in the place once occupied by pagan Romans and easy-going Sadducees. What was once the religion of poverty and renunciation has, according to

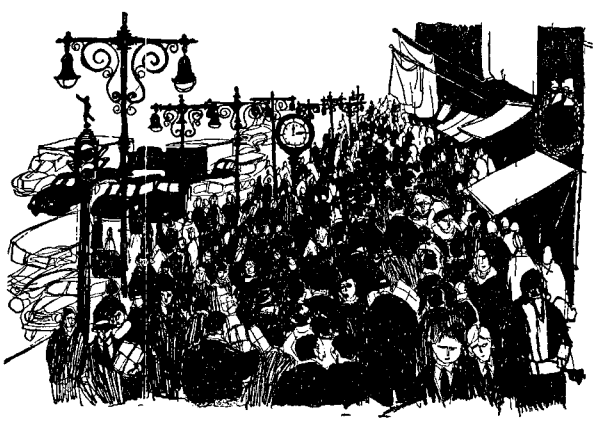
the penetrating analysis of our own sociologists, now become the dynamic power that drives progress forward. Has not a complex chemistry of abortive Judeo-Christian thought, through the failure and blindness of the believers, spawned Marxian Messianism, with its "sacral" totalitarian empire of a freak social justice, over that part of the globe where social and political injustice had been most rife? While we are fascinated in horror by the cruelty of Communism, its disregard of the individual's rights, its atheism, we forget that its success is due to our own callousness and complacency.

This Child in the crib is the Prince of Peace and angels sing of peace at His Birth. The poor next door get a basket of food and some extra fuel to ease our consciences. But are we Christians, Catholics as well as Protestants, perturbed to the degree we should be at the sight of so many who share the Babe's "thrown-ness" into the cruel, insensitive world composed of "images of the Creator"?

AS long as we state all this in general terms, those who do not simply brush such considerations aside as being "un-Christmas-like" will agree, and say how true it all is. But if we become more specific, won't we become "controversial"? What happened to the moving appeal of the Boston *Pilot* for expiation of the harm done Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Dresden? Did we Catholics or other Christians (except the Quakers, who dare "speak truth to power") do anything about it? Did we Catholics rise as one man when the murderers and kidnapers of a boy who was at worst a "fresh kid," went unpunished for their foul deed? The Eight Beatitudes include hunger for justice as well as poverty.

We have the wonderful examples of Archbishop Rummel and the South African hierarchy in the fight against racism; Archbishop Ritter stood up to the bigoted race fanatics in his diocese, as did Bishop Waters. But where was the popular response? Are the Catholics as a whole in certain cities of the North fighting for slum clearance? Are we Catholics of the West in the forefront of those who fight for the rights and fair treatment of migratory, seasonal farm laborers? What happened to the "President's Report" on the problem of the "wetbacks" who displace from jobs our citizens of Mexican ancestry? Archbishop Lucey played a great role in the hearings and editing, but was there a wave of Christian revulsion against callous employers who send checks to churches on Sundays, and employ "wetbacks" at fifteen cents an hour during the week, with the collusion of the responsible government agencies? And when The Commonweal published Father Houtart's article on a revolution shaping up in South America, which is ninety per cent Catholic, did we do anything but cluck and shake our heads? I suppose we would have clucked and shaken our heads in Bethlehem, too, even though we would have known the true nature of the Babe.

We have had pointed out to us again and again that the sword of Damocles hangs over the head of the white man on both sides of the Iron Curtain: the high standard of living protected by power wherever the white man prevails, as opposed to the abominable conditions of the Andes Indian, the South African miner, the Egyptian *fellah,* and the masses of India and Indonesia, to mention only those closest to our interest. If the danger hardly makes an impression on us, if our government has to side with its colonizing allies to protect our breadbasket, our shiny cars



and TV sets and all that they imply, what chance has the gesture of Almighty God, lying naked in an animal's crib as a little Jewish Babe born of a poor maiden? We will sing about His birth and what it meant for our sins. We will thank Him for His love of our unworthiness. But will we become restless at the thought that He represents those who do not share our "living standard," that His spectacular

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poverty, which moves pious souls to commiserate with Him, has a worldwide significance? And will we Catholics realize that all eyes are on us?

WHEN we take away from Christmas the silken vestments, the regal passages of Scripture, the magnificence of the cathedrals, the music of incomparable beauty, what remains? God speaking his Word Incarnate as a poor and helpless Infant, the plain bread and wine of His Memorial, the Eucharist. With the wealthy trappings taken away, the Word in Its bareness pierces the soul: "For the Word which God speaks is living and effective and sharper than any two-edged sword. It penetrates to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from Him: all things are laid bare and are uncovered to the eyes of Him to Whom we have to render account" (Heb. 4.12,13).

Because we have been tardy listeners to the Word, the enemy has seized the cause of the down-trodden and receives credit for his leadership—wrongly perhaps—by those who hunger for bread as well as for justice. This post-Geneva Christmas, with its promises of tax relief and an "enlightened" reduction of the Samaritan work which the wealthy nations had started to do, can either be soporific, lulling us in idyllic complacency and complete religious ego-centrism, or it can speak the "Thunder-Word" of Bethlehem in its stark reality. Looking into the eyes of the Infant, we meet the direct gaze of all the poor, of those in our own slums and in the depressed areas of the world who hunger after justice.

IN CENTRAL PARK

Memories of War

ALICE SAXON

"WHAT shall we play today? Bad men or good men?" "Bad men."

This exchange, never varying in its conclusion, was the daily ritual of a group of children who met every morning in the Central Park playground at 96th Street. In the days when I was a member of this group the location, 96th Street, was a curious point at which Park Avenue changed abruptly from buildings where children emerged from twelve-room apartments and were hurried past uniformed doormen by white-armored Frauleins on the way to the park and dragged back past the same doormen in time for five o'clock baths and a visit with mommy and daddy in the library—changed from this to tenements where boys and girls came out to scramble for nickels for "chawcolate bars," boys and girls who, when someone brushed into them or stared too hard or long at their poor little T-shirts and bare white collarbones and hunched shoulders and grimy foreheads with the ragged Dutch-boy bobs, would double up their fists automatically and give back looks of sad, fierce hatred that said—my flesh is flesh, too.

Only one street separated these two worlds, but the park, a circle of concrete with swings and slides, seesaws and funny peaked-roofed play houses, this was public domain, this was where the children of both worlds came, those with nurses and those who were alone.

We were alone. A "gang" of us, but alone. We scorned the busy center of the playground with its innocent frolics—playing "house," hopscotch, skating, tricycling, scootering—much of which made an issue of equipment, from doll buggies to colored chalk—and we met instead beyond the railing on a pathway that bounded the park, a dirt path where dogs were walked and where among the nearby bushes nurses took the children who "couldn't wait."

Here we lurked and skulked and each day renewed our vows to play "bad men." Not by any means was this a mere cops-and-robbers, bang-bang sort of thing. It was a deep-rooted revolt against law and order, an order that would seek to include us in its discipline but in none of its comforts. We made a whole dedicated anti-system of being bad. We didn't just play at being bad; we worked at it, steadily, meticulously, as some people work at being good.

It was not that we hadn't tried playing "good men." We had tried some positive approaches. Sometimes in a flash of heady optimism we would ask one of the nice children to "come to lunch at my house." Often enough the child, if not yet too worldly, would exclaim, "Oh goody!" and go skipping off to ask his nurse for permission, only to return more slowly

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with the vague information, "My nurse says I can't," and the nurse would sometimes come over and explain—"The rooms aren't big enough in the place where you live and you couldn't play nicely."

Gradually we had abandoned playing "good men." Not that our crimes were the kind to make the headlines. Ours was a more watered-down kind of delinquency, limited somewhat by our ages (no more than six or seven). We stole—deliberately and with great satisfaction—dolls from children who displayed them too proudly. We threw things, heckled, once tried to poison a child by putting red paint in her thermos of tomato juice. We stole a set of beautiful stones sent to another child by his uncle in California. It was not the possession of the stones that provoked us so, but the possession of an uncle who gave one presents. To have a family that backed you up, endowed you, sponsored you. . . .

Harold, the leader of our gang, who was much given to blustering and bullying and throwing unusually heavy objects such as shoeshine kits at people's heads—Harold presented a picture that ingeniously contained the elements of our predicament. He wore in the winter a sweater that had a hole in the back of it. It was a hole that grew as he grew, and I was always a little saddened by the sight of it unravelling, giving way; and this, together with the fact that he was a rather heavy jowled, fearsomely toothless and tough-looking child gave to him aspects both formidable and vulnerable, which was us—in toto.

PERHAPS all that chafed us was illustrated by some new children who one spring appeared and established themselves for a brief time in our park. They were from a large family, a girl our age, an older sister, two plump baby twin brothers and some older brothers, too old to make regular appearances in the playground. Altogether their number made them appear such a healthy, such a wanted group. They had about them an ideal, too-good-to-be-true quality, in that they were at once rich, and abundant in their number, and happy.

The sisters Madeleine and Jacqueline (I shall never forget the fascination of those rich, lovingly-polished sounding names) were dressed alike in impeccably tailored, velvet-collared Chesterfield coats, straw hats with long streamers, fine silky-looking white socks and shiny patent leather shoes—all this for every-day wear! From beneath their coats poked the frills of some soft blue dress such as I only dreamed of wearing. Jacqueline was dark-haired and serious, at least four years older than we. Madeleine was somewhat prettier, honey-haired and possessed a naive, eager little smile. The nurse who shepherded the precious charges, including the twin boys straining lustily at their harness, was starched and proud. She would sit placidly on her bench and every now and then for some unfathomable reason would bellow: "Mad-el-eine. Jacqu-e-line!" Instantly, they would stop whatever they were doing, skip over to the bench, align themselves neatly before their nurse and with a smart clicking of their heels and straightening of shoulders, would sing out: "Yes ma'am!"

We hovered near and listened and took this all in, the party dresses, the shiny combed hair, but above all the "Yes ma'am!"—the obedience. We stared—absorbed, grievous. Did we envy them? Did we wish we were they? Did we long with all our longing for them to notice us, to play with us? Would we have sold ourselves into such bondage?

Once their father came to the park (it was a heavenly thing to us to see a father with his children) and when Madeleine rode-a-cock-horse on his knee, her patent leathers sticking out in glee, we watched and were quite poignantly miserable.

From somewhere in the primitive depths of me a crude little plan arose and took shape, a plan of action that had all the spontaneity and brimful emotional content of dream behavior, and at the same time a certain diabolical efficiency, a sadly sophisticated attempt at strategy. I knew you could not offer friendship to these people. It didn't work. They had too much, and they knew it; they knew *they* had nothing to gain by being your friend. So—so—you must defeat them, beat them up, bring them to their knees, make them powerless before your violence, and then, and then . . . lightly, casually, above all magnanimously, as if bestowing a favor, offer them friendship. *Deign* to grant them your friendship.

Children are painfully inarticulate, and all this confusion and need emerged simply as a resounding cry across the park: "Come on gang! We've got to fight those kids!"

The persecution began; and at once it became the matter of which our days were composed. We declared our hostilities, flung taunts, prevented their use of every facility in the park, and threw sticks and stones at them. Madeleine and Jacqueline were startled and indignant and as helpless as two fawns. Yet they must have been a plucky pair for all their nurtured appearance, for I cannot remember their ever having "told" on us. They fought back as best they could—the two against the five of us—but mostly they ran, and scolded at us from a distance and comforted each other with violent epithets like, "Never mind those bad children!"

It was a season of war, a child's season, which meant that in reality it lasted perhaps little more than a week. At the end of that time we prepared to conquer the foe and bring him to terms. With growing hysteria we marched about in strict forma-

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tion chanting some sort of battle cry and finally surrounded Jacqueline and Madeleine. We commanded them to mount one of the wooden picnic tables while we grimly decided their fate. Being children, with their minds yet filled with rich imaginative sensibilities, they went along fully with the situation and all its trappings. We were the dreadful enemy who had won, and obediently, gloomily they awaited their fate as if they had no other course, as if the battlefield were not merely 96th Street, Central Park East.

It was then, with delicate caution and restraint —lest a week's buildup be carelessly lost—that I came forward with the offer which was the bitter core of all our wild display.

"We have decided," I announced with as much dignity and indifference and magnanimity as I could muster, "We have decided that we will let you be friends with us."

That we will *let* you—oh, what a hoax that phrasing hoped to perpetrate.

On Madeleine's face there appeared a quick look of innocent incredulity. "Really?" she gasped. But then when they had climbed down from their perch, Jacqueline pulled her younger sister a distance away and we watched them conferring, watched in an uneasy silence more real than our late noisy triumph. As Jacqueline looked askance at us, I could see that her eyes were narrowed slits of distrust and contempt. Finally she strode off, big, dark, and knowing (staining me with despair), and Madeleine followed her a little way, anxiously.

"Let's play with them!" she pleaded.

Jacqueline turned around. "No! You can if you want—if you want them to make a fool of you," she retorted with almost bitter impatience. "But I'm not. Can't you see they're not *nice children!*"

The oddity of their being dressed identically in their Chesterfield coats. All-knowing, worldly-wise Jacqueline. I knew she had seen through our subterfuge. She had perceived the weakness behind our sinister little conferences and name-calling and stone-flinging. "They are not nice children." It was true. I accepted her verdict. I hung my head and felt the heavy hand of justice on my shoulder, and still waited. . . .

THEY linger in my mind now like the long shadows of Miltonic angels: Jacqueline the stern embodiment of righteousness, the inexorable instrument of reward and punishment; Madeleine more like a gentle, gregarious Raphael, disappointed at the banishment of Adam and Eve, as she hesitated and looked after her older sister's retreat and bit her lower lip at the prospect of not getting to play with us.

But she did not follow. She was young and still tenderhearted and loath to judge and full of play: there was no room in her for memories of war.

She came to us open-handed, smiling, a trifle sheepishly, as if afraid of not being wise, came up to the five of us scalliwags, alone, and said:

"I want to be friends. I'd like to play with you."

She was indeed a fool, falling for our hoax, the Fool of Fools, perhaps. Yet in that moment, and in the long moments of play that followed, all differences melted, velvet collars unseen, cloaks cast off, hoaxes abandoned, hurts healed, cruel longing quieted—all this from folly.

The spell was brief, for they vanished from the park soon after their appearance; a strange appearance, bearing as they did signs of origin in some land of milk and honey, their entrance ushered in by battle, the one of them to judge, the other to forgive, and then to disappear.

I imagined vaguely that they were gathered up in an impetuous gesture of affection by doting parents who were suddenly unable to bear parting with them for even an afternoon, or that they were swept off to some foreign country (their father, lean and moustached, must, of course, be a diplomat or Important Official) or that they were dispatched to boarding school or camp, or perhaps—a pang at this new thought for I had no doubt that *this* was really true (no more than I doubted that the implacable thunder was God expressing anger at my misdeeds), they were simply taken away because of us: the lean moustached father, the starched proud nurse had suddenly become aware of our existence and instantaneously, with inexorable decision, had snatched the children away, locked them in their rooms, purged them and then trundled them off to some playground farther uptown, leaving us once more to our little rages and plots and plodding about the outside path, and our codes and our battle cries and our daily ritual:

"What shall we play today? Bad men or good men?"

"Bad men."

But the seeds of uncertainty had already taken root in my answer.

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THE STAGE

THE LARK

"SOME nights, when I am feeling depressed," Jean Anouilh has written of Joan of Arc, "I try to be rational and I say: the situation—social, political and military—was ripe for the phenomenon of Joan; a little shepherdess, one of the countless little shepherdesses who had seen the Virgin or heard voices, and who happened to be called Joan, came to fill a gap in the works, and then everything began turning." It is this image which dominates the play Miss Lillian Hellman has drawn from Anouilh's *L'Alouette,* and with which Miss Julie Harris has made so palpable a hit: the image, not of "the cornered animal caught at Rouen, but the lark singing in the open sky," brought down brokenly and in her flashing splendor by the malice of men. And it is as the lark that Joan takes her place in the company of Anouilh's celebrated heroines—young girls of a fantastic, lyrical purity and bloom—virgins all: doomed to violation by the grossness of the world's body. (Virginity, here as elsewhere in Anouilh, is of the essence: "Being a virgin is a state of grace," Warwick says to Joan, in an explicit passage Miss Hellman has curiously chosen to mute.)

"The Lark" then: even the title suggests how Joan is held in Anouilh's imagination. To Shaw—who chiseled the moral image of Joan which has dominated us for three decades—she is not so much symbol as spiritual fact: the emphasis falls heavily on transcendent being: *Saint* Joan. It will be fruitful to consider shortly how closely these images correspond to the 'truth' of Joan—or reveal a reality beyond that truth—but for the moment, one might wonder at some elisions and alterations of mere fact which Anouilh and Shaw have so liberally imposed on the pattern of history. (The truth of poetry, of course, is not the truth of history, but the paradox of Joan is that she so bluntly demands justification in terms of both.) I must confess that I have not read the testimony of the original trial for condemnation, yet we are fortunate to have at hand Mme. Régine Pernoud's lately issued and absorbing account of the proceedings for Joan's rehabilitation: *The Retrial of Joan of Arc* (Harcourt). And after Mme. Pernoud's disinterested, irrefutable proof of Cauchon's venal and time-serving hypocrisy, are not Shaw's benignly politic cleric and Anouilh's anxious spiritual advisor inadmissible as versions of historical fact? (One may perhaps ignore the satiric treatment of Warwick: in both Shaw and Anouilh an 'official' personality, well-bred, *blasé:* in actuality, a moral terrorist and bully.) We may possibly concede some latitude to Shaw—in his calculated insolence to the twentieth century, he sought to illustrate that Joan had a fairer hearing in the Middle Ages than she would have had from us—yet there seems no justification for Anouilh.

Or consider the false abjuration (one witness tells us that Joan signed smiling in mockery); or the 'arranged' relapse (how, for instance, may an excommunicated heretic be permitted to receive Communion? detail not mentioned by Anouilh or Shaw); or Joan's constant appeals to have audience of the Pope (again omitted), or the squalid matter of the secular prison in which Joan was kept, the promiscuous sexual conditions of which forced her to resume the forbidden male attire. Shaw characteristically and with impertinent charm sees the issue of masculine dress as a triumph of rational good sense, and Anouilh extracts a genuine pathos out of the theme.

A PRELUDE: FOR THE FEAST OF ST. AGNES

O Small St. Agnes, dressed in gold
With fire and rainbows round about your face:
Sing with the martyrs in my Mass's Canon!

Come home, come home, old centuries
Whose soundless islands ring me from within,
Whose saints walk down a winter morning's iris
Wait upon this altar stone
(Some of them holding palms
But others hyacinths!)

I speak your name with wine upon my lips
Drowned in the singing of the quiet catacomb.
My feet upon forget-me-nots
I sink this little frigate in the Blood of silence
And put my pall upon the cup
Working the mystery of peace, whose mercies must
Run down and find us, saint, by Saint John's stairs.

No lines, no globes,
No compass, no staring fires
No candle's cup to swing upon
My night's dark ocean.

There the pretended horns of time grow dim.
No tunes, no signals claim us any more.
The cities cry, perhaps, like peacocks.
But the cloud has come.

I kneel in this stone corner having blood upon my wrist
And blood upon my breast
O small St. Agnes, dressed in martyrdom
With fire and water waving in your hair.

THOMAS MERTON.

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But he also removes the sting of truth by obscuring from us the Bishop's awareness of Joan's intolerable situation: the horror lies in Cauchon's persistent denial of Joan's request for sanctuary in an ecclesiastical prison. Then again, the Inquisitor: Shaw's is mild by contrast with Anouilh's savage antagonist of "the natural man" (Miss Hellman's interpolation: the original reads 'man'), dedicated to the inexorable domination of the Idea, hunting down and extirpating "youth, generosity, human tenderness . . . . the uncommendable, graceless, cloudy drink of the milk of human kindness." I perhaps need not comment on this after some centuries of Christian humanism, but there is still a small irony in the fact that it was Jean Bréhat, the Grand Inquisitor of France, who spent five years collating the testimony which would release Joan's name from its ignominy and disgrace.

Again, however, I would stress: the truths of poetry and history are distinct. Shaw gives us the first: his Joan—pert, defiant, feminist, "the born boss," protestant, nationalist—cuts across the attitudes with which the dramatist has invested her to stand in the lonely splendor of time, victim and symbol of the tragic political nature of reality. We may cavil at this feature, dispute that posture, but Joan is not diminished—with splendid grace, she bears the weight of ideality. The image of "The Lark" has, on the contrary, not only lacunae of truth, but less strength and resonance and poetic reality. There are many beautiful and suggestive passages in Anouilh's drama (I am speaking of Mr. Christopher Fry's cleanly sculptured translation, which is oddly being patronized as 'literal.' Should not one wish to know exactly what a playwright means to say? For all her sharp sense of 'good theater,' Miss Hellman seems to me to have reduced the play to a genteel muddle) yet ultimately too much is burked: Joan *insists:* she is hard and resistant, not part of the plastic reality out of which Anouilh has shaped his several masterpieces of contemporary drama. He may have seen in her another focus through which to explore what one critic has called his dominating theme—the quest for authenticity—yet Joan's authenticity ('the mystery of her charity' in Péguy's phrase) has its sanction beyond time and character and the exquisite charm of that moment of national *gloire* (the coronation at Rheims) which is, for Anouilh, the true end of the story, "a kind of joy."

Miss Julie Harris places Joan at the very center of this curious tapestry of medieval life: her performance—so delicate and touching and exact—is full of that special poetry of intensity which makes Miss Harris so unique and luminous a figure in our theater. This is not the visionary Joan of Claudel and Péguy, but it has something of the spendthrift audacity and vehemence of the wilful, enchanting creature we discern vaguely through the fine network of Mme. Pernoud's scholarship: the high-spirited girl who hotly matches her domestic skill against that of any housewife in Rouen; who gleefully threatens to pull the ears of the clerk who had erroneously transcribed one of her replies, and who potently flashes out at her judges: "Oh yes, you'll record anything against me all right, but you won't record anything *for* me." Yet for the first time in Miss Harris' career, I feel the absence of weight and variety in her playing: what her Joan lacks is the passionate echo of the doomed girl tearing her hair in the cage of her prison, and calling on God to witness Cauchon's treachery. Beaudricourt is given an excellent reading by Mr. Theodore Bikel, and the Warwick of Mr. Christopher Plummer is masculine and adroit. As the Inquisitor, Mr. Joseph Wiseman gives his usual psychopathic performance. Mr. Joseph Anthony has animated the stage with fresh and ingenious movement, yet the production wants on the whole the fluid line of Anouilh's intention: in particular are the scenes of court life insufficiently stylized to enforce the playwright's dramatic point. Mr. Leonard Bernstein's celestial choirs rather dreadfully do not come off.

I would wish, in conclusion, to draw the attention of my readers to Mr. Eric Bentley's notice of "The Lark" in the *New Republic* of December 5: it is by far quite the most telling commentary the play has yet occasioned. (*At the Longacre.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

MOURNING BECOMES MAGNANI

SINCE "The Rose Tattoo" was written for Anna Magnani in the first place, and she could not play it on the stage, we are doubly fortunate in having her in the movie. If ever an actress could truly be said "to run the gamut," Miss Magnani does in this film about a widow, Serafina, whose mourning for her late husband has warped her life. During the three years since his death, Serafina has practically withdrawn from the living; she hangs around the house unkempt, venerates her husband's ashes which she has placed in an urn, and hovers over her daughter whom she guards with suspicion. So overly conscious of sex is Serafina that she drives the young girl (Marisa Pavan) into the arms of a sailor (Ben Cooper) with her erratic and erotic behavior. All this gives Miss Magnani a chance to shoot the works, especially after the inevitable bomb of truth bursts in Serafina's face.

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A couple of trollops spitefully spill the low-down on the affair her husband had with another woman (Virginia Grey). This arouses Serafina to a frustrated rage which she takes out on her daughter and the sailor, and on the village priest (Sandro Giglio) when, after going into ecstacy about the beauty of her marriage, she pleads with him to tell her if her husband ever confessed about another woman.

In writing the movie script, Tennessee Williams cleared up his original play somewhat, but it is still diffuse and mainly a character portrait of a vain, superstitious woman who is obsessed with sex. No doubt she understands the priest when he tells her that grief is a natural and dignified thing which, like every other emotion, can become excessive and then a sort of self-indulgence. And no doubt, deep down even before she gets the proof she realizes her husband was unfaithful. But she cannot admit he might have preferred another woman. Hal Wallis has given "The Rose Tattoo" a good production photographed handsomely in black-and-white in VistaVision, and Daniel Mann has directed well his large cast, including those playing the neighbors of the volatile widow in this largely-Italian village in southern United States. I think the film suffers in the casting of Burt Lancaster as the truck driver who falls in love with Serafina and hopes to win her by having tattooed on his chest a rose similar to the one her much-loved husband had. While this role demands something of the fool and clown, Lancaster leers, grins and plays the character as if he were the village idiot. Perhaps this is the way Director Mann wanted it done, but this also detracts considerably from the film's ending. Obviously "The Rose Tattoo" is adult fare but without Magnani it would not be worth the celluloid it's printed on. Her magnificent performance not only makes the picture, but it is the year's best. It will be interesting to see how *adults* in Hollywood vote come next Oscar time.

AS an independent producer, Samuel Goldwyn, Jr., has come up with a western than many a veteran producer would be proud of—and rightly so. "Man with a Gun" belongs to the "High Noon" school of outdoor dramas which says that a man must stand up and fight for his convictions. In this case, Robert Mitchum, in what is certainly one of the best performances he has ever given, rides into a small western town in the 1870's and takes on the job of bringing law and order to a community that is being terrorized by a ruthless rancher and his henchmen. Beside being a sure-shot, Mitchum has a reputation of being a "town tamer." But as their deputy marshal, Mitchum insists on a midnight curfew and a law against wearing guns in town, and the merchants soon decide he is tougher and more unpleasant than the villainous rancher. They would even like to get rid of Mitchum so that they can hang out their business-as-usual signs. Furthermore, Jan Sterling, boss of the dance-hall girls at the saloon, walked out on her husband, Mitchum, some years ago because he was a killer—albeit a killer behind a badge. Director Richard Wilson, who wrote the lively script with N. B. Stone, Jr., works out this problem effectively with a maximum of action and a minimum of words. His cast includes Henry Hull, Karen Sharpe, John Lupton who act like real people living in a real town. Unfortunately, real people are not always as nice as most movie characters but they give us more to think about. And so does this movie.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"CASE FOR THE FARMER"

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Mr. James Hearst, in his article, "Case for the Farmer" [November 18], writes as though the farmer were the only one at the mercy of forces beyond his control. But that is true of practically all of us. At the beginning of World War II, many owners of small firms had to close down because supplies needed for their particular business were being used exclusively for the manufacture of war materials. They were left with rent contracts, unfilled orders, and other commitments, and received no help from the Government. At the same time the farmer was selling all he could produce at top prices. If three out of five people go hungry every night, it is because they cannot buy the needed food. Supporting prices will not make their lot easier. So that statement is irrelevant.

With Government supporting prices every farmer does his utmost to grow the maximum amount his farm will produce as long as he is assured a profit. When the demand exceeds the supply, as during the war, his profits are enormous. If the farmer receives 47 cents out of each dollar the customer spends for bread and butter, he is doing as well as most producers. The tractor manufacturer does not get the full retail price the farmer pays for a tractor. He has to pay a commission to the salesman, pay freight charges, and other expenses that are similar to the cost of processing of wheat and milk into bread and butter.

Every business this writer knows anything about has to adjust its production to the estimated demand, be it tractor manufacturer, book publisher, or toy maker. In book publishing the editors recommend a book to be published, and the publisher prints the

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number of copies he thinks he can sell. But if the book does not appeal to the reading public, the books are sold at whatever price they will bring, or are destroyed.

During the depression of the thirties farm income declined but farm production dropped only about 3% according to Mr. Hearst. But how many banks went out of business? How many firms failed? The farmer did not suffer any more than the average man. Farm mortgages were foreclosed, but so were mortgages on thousands of homes.

If the loss for the whole farm program is only a little more than one billion dollars during the past twenty years, what has the Government gained by it? If the aids and special services to business have amounted to one billion dollars each year, that sum is certainly justified by the amount of taxes collected from business corporations. Did Mr. Hearst include the cost of the Department of Agriculture and the cost of the Department of Commerce in his figures?

If some plan can be worked out to help the little farmer when he needs help, without doing the same thing for the big ones who do not need help any more than large corporations in business and industry do, no taxpayer would object. But the farmer who cannot make a profit has no more right to assistance than the business man or industrialist who cannot make his firm show a profit. The Future Farmers of America and the members of the 4H Clubs seem to do rather well without Government aid.

JOHN D. HOLBY.

"PROTECTION FOR THE INNOCENT"

Pittsburgh, Pa.

TO the Editors: In the November twenty-fifth issue of The Commonweal the claim is made in one of your editorials that a "recent Supreme Court decision may allow a murder to go unpunished" but that it is "better, in our imperfect world, that a murderer go untried than that freedom itself should languish in the stockade."

Despite the fact that the Supreme Court has rendered its decision and that we must accept it as final, there are still some aspects of the Toth case which deserve re-consideration. Much public sentiment, as you know, was aroused for Toth in the Pittsburgh newspapers as well as in other journalistic organs because of the tactless manner in which he was arrested in 1953. Even though the Army should have anticipated much of the indignation that its apprehension of Toth would cause, it was nevertheless simply performing the duty of returning to the scene of the crime a man who was suspected of implication in the murder of a Korean civilian. In the public mind, however, the manner of Toth's arrest obscured and took priority over this fact amid widely publicized comments that Toth had been victimized and that the implication of his arrest by the Army would leave no "veteran" beyond the pale of the Army's "version of justice."

It has been conceded that the only court which would have had jurisdiction over Toth would have been a Korean court, and the military has now been told that it is and will be unable to return the suspected ex-soldier to that country because of the possibility of infringement upon his constitutional rights. The Supreme Court has decided that Toth's honorable discharge had placed him beyond the purlieu of the only power, the Army, which could have returned him to Korea for trial or, at least, testimony. The fact now remains that justice has not been done in the murder of an oriental an ocean away from us and that any possibility of the man's murderer being found has been precluded.

Despite The Commonweal's claim that this decision is a "protection for the innocent," which it may very well be, the irony of the decision is that Toth has emerged as a hero and that the Army, not only placed in checkmate in regard to Toth himself and to others whose cases parallel his, has been characterized as the perpetrator of some evil deed. The public, bombarded with human interest stories of his recent marriage and his patriotic desire to be the first to serve in "the next one," has come to see Toth as one who, with the help of countless field-cap organizations, has beaten the Army at its own game. The death of this Korean seems to have been ignored. It seems to me, therefore, that any account of this case should not concern itself so much with a consideration of the Supreme Court's decision, which has the ring of rationalization after the fact, as with an attack upon the forces which obscured the basic issues of the case in the public mind—not so much for the sake of the Army as for the sake of justice itself, which the Army, I believe, was trying however undiplomatically to serve.

SAMUEL J. HAZO.

"CYCLE FOR MOTHER CABRINI"

Portsmouth, R. I.

TO the Editors: In reviewing the first brilliant collection of Mr. John Logan's poetry, I overlooked a practical consideration—a consideration which will please readers of The Commonweal. His book, *Cycle for Mother Cabrini,* is available for $1.00 from the Grove Press (795 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y.) in an "Evergreen Book of Poetry" edition. Poetry so reasonably available can remain unread *only* unreasonably.

JOHN FANDEL.

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The Decisive Mr. Truman

WILLIAM V. SHANNON

THE natural tendency of the historian, it has been said, is to set a seal of approval on the past. Nowhere is this temptation to give gross importunate fact the color of virtue and the patina of inevitability more insistent than where the events are great and the human shapers of history seemingly dwarfed.

Certainly, most reviewers of former President Truman's first volume of memoirs, "Year of Decisions," appear to have yielded to this beguiling temptation.* Mr. Truman's first eighteen months in office in 1945-46 were an era of imposing events—the surrender of Germany, the Russian advance into Eastern and Central Europe, the proving of the atomic bomb, the fall of Japan. History in those days moved with "the tramp of earthquake feet." The death of Roosevelt at the outset of this period projected into the Presidency and the leadership of the world coalition a man of second-rank prestige whose personal qualities were little known to his fellow citizens, whose executive experience was meager and diplomatic experience nil. Given this concatenation of events, observers at the time were prey to instincts of fear and charity which a decade later continue to overmaster their critical judgment.

The rush of events was patently so swift and terrible, and Mr. Truman, since little was known of him, might so easily have proved to be a far worse man than he actually was that it is easy to be grateful and uncritical. Yet these considerations do not reach the heart of the matter. Granted the context of this year of decisions, the questions remain: Were these the right decisions? What were the alternatives? Were these known and, if so, for what reasons were they not chosen? Only in these terms can the writing of history be a fruitful exercise and rise above the chronicle of reminiscence and the essay of appreciation.

These memoirs, as was inevitable, inhibit as much as they aid history's analytic task. An autobiography is by its very nature a plea for the defense, an act of self-justification. Only the very greatest memoirs written by reflective and thoughtful men partially escape this flaw, and Mr. Truman is not a reflective man. He boasts at one point that he tells his story "without any introspective trimmings." At the end of his first two months in office he wrote his mother, "I don't dare think of facing the next two months let alone two years. I have to take things as they come and make every decision on the basis of the facts as I have them and then go on from there; then forget that one and take the next."

The former President marshals his facts in this same manner—much as if they were pins in a bowling alley: when one set is knocked over, he turns to the next. There is neither retrospection nor introspection. He does not stop at any point to add up the score. The brisk, staccato approach has the effect of sweeping the reader along from crisis to crisis with scarcely a backward glance. As an executive technique, Mr. Truman's personal style had the virtue of shutting out worry and regret. Unfortunately, it also excludes crucial considerations of value and judgment.

DURING this period Mr. Truman's premises were simple and brooked no reexamination. They consisted of pursuing the wars against Germany and Japan until unconditional surrender of the enemy was achieved, of organizing the peace through the United Nations, and of adhering strictly to all of Mr. Roosevelt's wartime promises to the allies. Mr. Truman's strength consisted in following the logical implications of these premises firmly and consistently. His tragedy and ours is that those premises were no longer valid.

Roosevelt's wartime policy was founded on the gigantic gamble that Russia would cooperate with the West for many years after the war. The calculated risk was undeniably sound from 1941 to 1944. The United States needed Russia as a fighting ally. Russia's enormous war losses (twenty million soldiers and civilians dead and staggering industrial and agricultural devastation) made it seem likely that the Soviets would need a generation to recoup their strength. Russia's quiescent foreign policy between 1919 and 1939, moreover, lent credence to the belief that the worldwide expansion of Communist influence was far down on the Kremlin's schedule of priorities. Our wartime policy was a gamble, but it was the only feasible gamble at the time.

By the winter of 1944-45, it was becoming clear to Roosevelt and his advisers that the gamble would fail. Stalin's intransigence at Yalta and the sinister meddling in the internal affairs of Greece and Poland disclosed

*MEMOIRS BY HARRY S. TRUMAN, Vol. I: Year of Decisions. Doubleday. $5.

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Russia's intention to push its power into the Far East, Eastern and Central Europe, and the Mediterranean as far as possible. It is useless to speculate how Roosevelt would have coped with this developing threat. It is all too evident how Mr. Truman did.

He blundered ahead blindly, never looking to right or left, never reassessing the strategic situation, ignoring everything save the narrow dogmas of his military advisers. In reading these five-hundred sixty-one closely-printed pages, one longs desperately but in vain for Mr. Truman, at some point, to stop and look around him. It was indeed a year of decisions and he an all too decisive man. One wishes for fewer decisions but more carefully thought out, more agonized over, more freshly and boldly conceived.

THERE can be few more painful experiences than to read the exchanges in the fateful spring of 1945 between Winston Churchill, the wise old guardian of a sinking empire who knew the long history of statecraft too well to think that each new page was likely to be so altogether different from what had gone before, and who in his most hurried moments never lost sight of the scope and the stakes of battle, and Harry Truman, the well-intentioned, self-confident, eternally busy man who had read much of history but remembered the footnotes and forgot the great lessons. Almost every dispatch from London was a red flag of warning, almost every note afforded some piercing glimpse of the dark future that has become our bleak reality.

Churchill warned of the terrible menace posed by the Red Army's entrenching itself in Eastern Europe. He pleaded for a rapid eastward sweep of the allied armies to gather Prague, Vienna, and Berlin within the western fold. He urged repeatedly that the American armies hold their tactical position in Germany after the surrender and not retreat to the occupation zones hastily and arbitrarily contrived a year earlier. On May 11, 1945, he wrote, "Mr. President, in these next two months the gravest matters in the world will be decided." On June 4, he used for the first time the ominous words "iron curtain." He wrote to Mr. Truman that he viewed "with profound misgivings the retreat of the American army to our lines of occupation in the Central Sector, thus bringing Soviet power into the heart of Western Europe and the descent of the iron curtain between us and everything to the eastward." He expressed the hope "that this retreat, if it has to be made, would be accompanied by the settlement of many great things which would be the true foundation of world peace. Nothing really important has been settled yet, and you and I will have to bear great responsibility for the future."

Each time there came back from Washington the same uncomprehending responses. The eastern capitals could not be occupied because General Eisenhower's tactical arrangements could not be interfered with. Our position in the Russian Zone of Germany would have to be yielded up because "I am advised that it would be highly disadvantageous to our relations with the Soviet to postpone action in this matter until our meeting in July." Peace overtures had already come from Japan but our military position in Europe would have to be gravely weakened to provide men for the scheduled invasion of Japan. To these rapid-fire memos of decision, Churchill was compelled to respond with the terribly poignant words, "obviously we are obliged to conform to your decision."

The messages from Mr. Truman are starkly businesslike, devoid of any overtones or reflections on the course of events, which is not surprising given his unreflective nature. Yet when one comes to a statement like the following, one is reduced almost to despair: "I was trying to get Churchill in a frame of mind to forget the old power politics and get a United Nations organization to work."

The Churchill-Truman exchanges remind one of the "Memoirs" of Count Witte in which that last great Russian statesman of the old régime pleads in vain with the czar for reform and warns with striking prescience of the debacle that lies ahead. The irony is, however, that Mr. Truman was no Nicholas II who did not know better. Mr. Truman was excellently informed on the nature of Russian designs. On the smaller issues, the Polish elections, Tito's seizure of Trieste, and the like, he fought tenaciously and well. It was not his clarity of vision but his scope, not his courage but his flexibility, not his information but his imagination that was deficient.

THE war by the spring of 1945 had, or rather should have, passed out of the hands of the generals. Their work was done. It was the statesman's hour. Then, and only then, was there the opportunity to rescue Europe and save the coming peace. Then was the time for a bold showdown with the masters of Russia, if necessary a military showdown. Stalin's messages to Mr. Truman were already evasive, insulting, uncompromising. The new world organization, then forming at San Francisco, was already stricken with the blight of his malignant hostility. The pattern everywhere was unmistakably clear. When Mr.Truman finally took positive countermeasures two years later (the Greek-Turkish aid program and the launching of the Marshall Plan), those actions were needed and were therefore a cause for rejoicing, but the scene had changed. What had once been fluid was now fixed. He had passed from the time when unilateral American decision was still possible to a time of containment and unending struggle.

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Mr. Truman's rigidity was also at the bottom of his catastrophic error in the use of the atomic bomb. He knew from the first that this discovery transformed warfare and would soon transform civilization. But he could not transcend his fixation that a land invasion on the model of the Normandy landings would be necessary to end the war with Japan. His only justification for the use of the bomb was the saving of American lives in the prospective invasion, never comprehending that the same end could by then have readily been achieved by the arts of negotiation even if the bomb had never been invented. Japan was beaten and knew it. Mr. Truman neither knew it nor made an effort to find out. He recounts a graphic anecdote concerning the Potsdam Conference.

"I told Stalin and Churchill that we should discuss the next day some of those points on which we could come to a conclusion. Churchill replied that the (foreign) secretaries should give us three or four points—enough to keep us busy.

"I said I did not want just to discuss. I wanted to decide.

"Churchill asked if I wanted something in the bag each day.

"He was as right as he could be. I was there to get something accomplished, and if we could not do that, I meant to go back home. . . . I was getting tired of sitting and listening to needless debate on matters that could not be settled at this conference yet took up precious time."

Time was indeed precious but not in the sense that Mr. Truman meant. The conference hurried on, made its decisions, and like many in that "year of decisions," they haunt us yet.

BOOKS

The Fruitful Ambiguity in Newman's Thought

THE IMPERIAL INTELLECT: A STUDY OF NEWMAN'S EDUCATIONAL IDEAL. A. Dwight Culler. Yale University Press. $5.

By FREDERICK D. WILHELMSEN

THE papers of John Henry Newman reveal him as a man who was forever moving the furniture of his mind, rustling the ghosts of past friendships, and stirring the ashes of dead convictions. He was somehow driven to spend half his life writing books and papers and the other half in trying to put them in order.

Newman's rooms in the Oratory at Birmingham remain filled, Mr. Culler tells us in his *The Imperial Intellect,* with "cupboards, ranged almost from floor to ceiling, which contain journals, notebooks . . . published and unpublished works, proof sheets and memoranda . . . a veritable treasure of thousands of pages. And in the Archivium," he continues in his Introduction, "there are letters, how many one would hesitate to say, but . . . they comprise over four hundred volumes." Mr. Culler has handled every page. The author's labor has not been without issue: no one will close the covers of *The Imperial Intellect* with the impression that he has read this many times before.

The earlier sections of the book are biographical; they trace the growth of Newman's educational philosophy from his youthful experience at Trinity, through Oriel, and finally to the Catholic University of Ireland. The young Newman of Oxford, the man in whom hundreds of undergraduates placed their faith—*"Credo in Newmanum"*—emerges as a more intense, more sensitive, more doctrinaire figure than the philosopher of the *Idea of a University* and the Rector of the Catholic University. So far as his educational theory was concerned, the urbane Newman of the mature years—proclaiming liberal knowledge as an end in itself and insisting on the imperial preeminence of the intellectual in the life of learning—this Newman has little in common with the earlier, who solicited votes at Convocation for the retention of the religious tests at Oxford; who was torn by the apparent contradiction between his clerical vocation and his role as tutor in the profane disciplines at Oriel. The younger Newman dreamed of turning Oxford back into a quasi-monastic institution; the older Newman never tired of insisting that a university is one thing and a seminary another.

Yet there remains a close continuity between the experience of the younger and the theory of the older Newman. Mr. Culler gives an acute analysis of the emotional hell Newman went through whenever he was examined. His natural bent towards the universal, his preference for judgment, his impatience with detail, his vision—all these made him a man who insisted upon pursuing *subjects* rather than *books.* But the Oxford of the day examined candidates on the mastery of books, not subjects.

Newman's theory of education emerges at the hands of Mr. Culler as a growth whose flower is a universal vision of the whole, an all-inclusive knowledge compounded of many parts, each ordered according to the whole. Although Newman frequently argued that theology must be included in a universal education on the grounds that theology is knowledge, and a university education cannot ignore anything laying valid claim to knowledge—his argument is merely syllogistic and rhetorical. He is really gripped by the conviction that only theology can give man a *genuine* "view" of the whole order of reality.

According to Mr. Culler, this necessity to see the whole, to integrate the parts within a view which both transforms and includes all

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disciplines is the great problem in Newman's theory of education. In his theological writing, Newman insists that theology alone can integrate. In his educational doctrine, when he speaks formally as a philosopher, Newman customarily assigns this role to some "Architectonic Science of Philosophy, *whatever it be.*" The author maintains that Newman failed to distinguish carefully between a "liberal knowledge" which would be a view of the whole, and a discipline which would differentiate one science from another, and thus determine the respective relations between them. It would seem—so it appears to me—that a man could possess the latter without the larger view; that a man could know metaphysics—in the Aristotelian sense of a First Philosophy—that he could assign to each humanistic discipline its proper place in the scheme of education; could determine the kinds of abstraction used and the methods employed in the various sciences making up the hierarchy of knowledge—yet this man might still fail to see them all as an harmonious whole. To use a language less English than Newman's, a man could be a metaphysician and an epistemologist without being liberally educated. Here experience is the test: we have all met such men: we know the philosophical pedant when we see him.

The ambiguity—a fruitful ambiguity we must admit—in Newman's thought is centered in his incomplete distinction between "liberal knowledge" or the "large view" and the Architectonic Science, "The Science of Sciences." Mr. Culler locates the problem in the mingling of the Baconian and Aristotelian traditions in the mind of the Cardinal. In Bacon, universality of knowledge resulted from a univocal application of philosophical and scientific principles to the many sciences which fell under "first philosophy" as species under a genus. In his own metaphor, philosophy stood to the order of understanding as a trunk stands to the branches of a tree. Thus fullness of knowledge, or education in its fullness, was the effect of discovering universally applicable principles and applying them to the many sciences which were thereby carried forward to their completion; a universal education both perfected the man who had it and the sciences he practiced. By an extension—a pious extension at best—one might find similarities between the Baconian ideal and the Aristotelian conception of metaphysics as *scientia.* By no sleight of hand can one confuse Bacon's first philosophy with Aristotle's conception of Wisdom. And it was Wisdom, despite the apparent ambiguities in some of Newman's expressions, that he had in mind when he spoke of "liberal knowledge," a discipline irreducible to any one of the sciences, even "The Science of Sciences." Wisdom was a discipline "vertical" in character, a philosophical act—a judgment. Thereby a man determined, says Mr. Culler:

> how much of the world is spirit and how much matter and what the relations are between them . . . for Newman, the problem of truth was a problem of discrimination. It was posed by confusion rather than ignorance and was to be solved not by the augmentation of the sciences, but by their pacification. Bacon's desire was for more knowledge, Newman's for a synthesis of the knowledge already existing.

For an ideal of the liberally educated, Newman had at hand Aristotle's "magnanimous man." Rejecting the Greek ideal for its "harshness," however, he fell back on the tradition of the "gentleman." But as a Christian, Newman knew the saints. His attempt to reconcile the secular gentleman and the Christian saint is crucial for the current debate concerning the end of Christian education. Newman's gentleman—that favorite of anthologists—is described, Mr. Culler tells us, almost wholly in negative terms. He *is nothing* in himself and therefore offends no man, but St. Paul would have us *be all things* to all men.

If this concept of Christian Wisdom was not the center of Newman's educational theory, its reality was the centre of his life. The Newman of *The Arians of the Fourth Century, The Essays on the Development of Christian Doctrine,* and the *Apologia pro vita sua* has been called 'The Last Father of the Church.' This is the mind and character—so it seems to me—that Christian education should emulate today. Into the mind of Newman went the classical tradition of Europe, the full inheritance of English letters, the piety of speech of the seventeenth century, the urbanity of the eighteenth: but the whole was transfigured in a Wisdom which is not of this world. It is unlikely that present day education will ever bring forth a Newman; but any education that aims at making anything less is unworthy of the Catholic Name.

Not to Destroy, But to Fulfill

THE BRIDGE. A Yearbook of Judaeo-Christian Studies. Edited by John M. Oesterreicher. Pantheon. $3.95.

By ROBERT PAUL MOHAN

THE publication of this volume marks the beginning of a venture by the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University to investigate for our times the implications of the famous statement of Pius XI: "Spiritually, we are Semites." This first volume is a scholarly effort that attempts to show the unity of the divine plan as it proceeds from the Ancient Dispensation to its fulfillment in authentic Christianity, and to "confront the rabbinical tradition with the teaching of the Church." The former theme is particularly well developed in an excellent essay, *According to Matthew,* by the Abbot of Downside.

Subsequent issues of the yearbook will continue to investigate Jewish culture, analyze relations between Christian and Jew in the

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secular order, and evaluate Jewish efforts to interpret Christianity. In short, this ambitious enterprise will extend into the fields of theology, philosophy, sociology, art, and literature.

Although conceived by the editors in the sympathetic spirit of Justin's classic *Dialogue with Trypho, The Bridge* happily does not attempt that ideological juggling which results in the apotheosis of compromise. The current popularity of the "common denominator" approach reminds one of Chesterton's observation that compromise used to mean that half a loaf was better than no bread, whereas in recent practice it seems to mean that half a loaf is better than a whole loaf.

The editors, however, do not attempt to purchase irenicism with the counterfeit coin of indifferentism, although they do manifest a justifiable reverence for the Judaic backgrounds of Christianity.

Such a venture can indeed be welcomed, not only for its general cultural contribution, but because it may help dispel the historical illiteracy that sometimes manifests itself in the strident anti-Semitism regrettably heard from isolated corners of the household of the Faith.

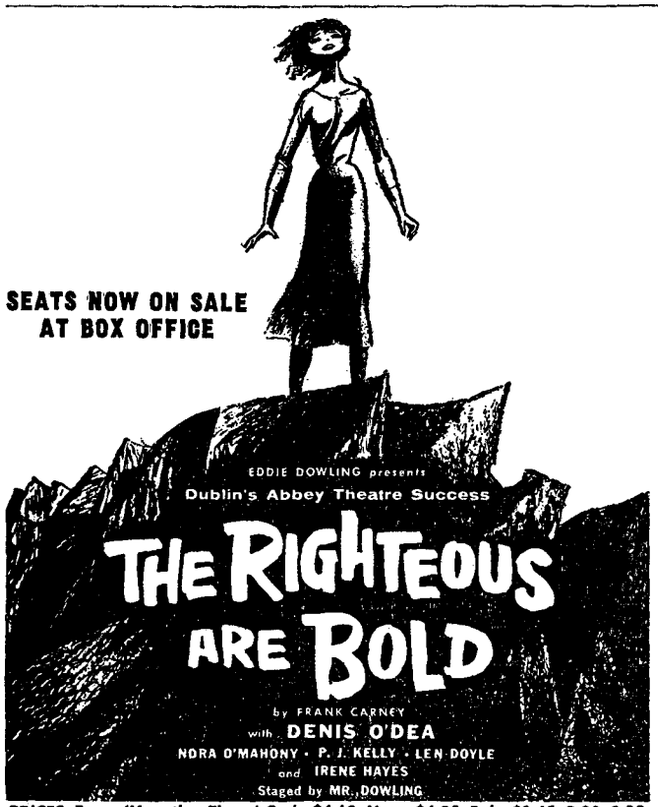
One may indulge in controversy on the involved socio-political issues of Jewish nationalism, but, as Monsignor John Dougherty points out in an introductory essay, one can hardly justify, as the second century Marcion tried to justify, a complete and radical opposition between the Law and the Gospels. Philip Hughes observes that Marcionism is simply St. Paul's doctrine of the emancipation from the law exaggerated to caricature. Contemporary anti-Semitism of this *a priori* kind is a revived Marcionism which gives its adherents the spurious psychological satisfaction of believing that a hatred of Judaism is fidelity to Christianity.

If there is to our *natura vulnerata* a greater joy than doing a good work by stealth, and having it discovered by accident, it is probably yielding to our personal dislikes, and being able to explain away such vice as virtue.

It is impossible to review in detail a work of this size, as the subject matter ranges from Scripture studies and Jewish liturgy to analyses of the *causes célèbres,* the Finaly case and the fraudulent protocols of Zion.

It is inevitable, moreover, that in a work of this nature one should disagree with some of the positions assumed or evaluations made. This reviewer feels, for instance, that attempts to make Simone Weil a kind of unaffiliated Christian with a unique vocation to be uncommitted are most unfortunate. However unselfish and admirable her life, Simone Weil, "indifferent to all ideas without exception," and considering it her vocation to remain in the great mass of unbelievers, was not simply an uncommitted Christian. She was not a Christian at all.

Among the book reviews are critiques of the work of two significant figures on the contemporary Jewish scene: Will Herberg and Martin Buber. And J. Edgar Bruns is particularly effective in re-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viewing the academically quaint excursions of the English poet-novelist Robert Graves into biblical hermeneutics.

The Bridge is elegantly bound and moderately priced; one wishes only that the Chagall illustrations were in color.

The Overdue Tribute

MEN IN THE FIELD. By Leo L. Ward. University of Notre Dame. $3.50.

By JOHN A. LYNCH

WHEN, in 1931, Leo L. Ward's "The Threshing Ring," from *The Midland,* appeared in Edward J. O'Brien's *Best Short Stories,* it was in good company. William Faulkner was there with "That Evening Sun Go Down" and F. Scott Fitzgerald with "Babylon Revisited." When, in 1932, Leo L. Ward appeared again, this time with "The Quarrel," from *Story,* he had maintained his position with Faulkner and had momentarily gained recognition beyond that of such writers as Fitzgerald, Edith Wharton and Wilbur Daniel Steele.

The next year Father Ward was out of the running, but still strong enough to place two stories on O'Brien's "Roll of Honor," abreast of Conrad Aiken's "Silent Snow, Secret Snow," and ahead of Dorothy Parker's "Horsie," Kay Boyle's "Black Boy," and anything John O'Hara recorded that year at all.

Father Ward's stories appeared in the years 1927 to 1933, years of transition for the short story. They ended abruptly in the midst of the depression (he had begun teaching at Notre Dame in 1927 and was later, in 1936, to become head of his department, a position he held until his death in 1953), the same year that saw the end of John T. Frederick's *The Midland,* perhaps the greatest regional magazine this country has known. It was in *The Midland* that most of Father Ward's stories appeared, and it is John T. Frederick who writes the introduction to the present collection.

"In *Men in the Field",* Mr. Frederick writes, "the days and ways of the real corn-belt farm of a generation ago are seen for the first time clear and whole." It is this, I believe, that gives the stories both their strength and their burden.

It is their strength because the world Father Ward knew was a strong world and he put it, fully-realized, into his stories: the threshers, the farm wives, rain, wind, drought, public auctions, and "the crowing of a cock far away on the prairie." Father Ward could be in turn, as the material demanded, keen, humorous, or tragic, often nostalgic, always honest.

But the reality of his stories was their burden, too. With the increasing attention paid to the "social" story in the thirties and forties, and with the increase of the "psychological" story (often wayward), readers who wanted to be "aware" weaned themselves from the stories of simple men and simple things

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and fed themselves instead on stories more violent, and those apt to be more obscure and/or more challenging.

Edward O'Brien wrote in 1933: "New York is not America. If you wish to discover America, you must read these three magazines (*The Midland, The Frontier* and *The Prairie Schooner*)." Perhaps he saw the change coming and was hoping to stave it off. Only *The Prairie Schooner* still exists, and it has lost much of the vigor of its early years. *The Frontier* closed in 1939. For the others, *Story* is gone; *Hound and Horn, North American Review,* and *Pagany* are names of the past.

The years of Father Ward's writing were rich years for the short story in America; it is to his credit and our pleasure that he was recognized then as among the best of writers. That he has since passed out of the anthologists' range of vision is to be regretted; that this volume of eighteen stories has been published is a tribute welcomed as long overdue.

Of Classic Greatness

HILAIRE BELLOC: A Memoir. By J. B. Morton. Sheed & Ward. $3.

By J. L. MADDUX

FOR the generation of American Catholics born between the two world wars Hilaire Belloc is remembered chiefly as the second and less-read half of the Chesterbelloc. For the unacquainted there is the vague image of an uproarious, swashbuckling, Rabelaisian, bellicose, beer-drinking Belloc, shouting down the Church's enemies with a flood of books written by broadsword rather than pen.

For the pedants it has been the fashion for the past twenty years to regard the serious work of Belloc, if indeed they regarded it at all, as being *passé* at best, and unreliable, unscholarly, and hopelessly prejudiced at worst. (Folk such as these need to read and understand—if such as they can—Frederick Wilhelmsen's brilliant *Hilaire Belloc: No Alienated Man.*)

Though his purely literary works have been treated less harshly (not long ago a prominent Catholic critic spoke of his "sterile ironies"), the genre in which he excelled, the essay, has already lost favor, and his poetry, save perhaps for his nonsense verse, seems largely left unread. All this is unfortunate and, as is the case with so much pedantic criticism, is based largely on the dreary repetition of the careless judgments of others. Few people today really read Belloc; many damn him. As one might gloomily expect, those who damn him the loudest have read him the least.

For those who have had the good fortune to roam widely in the vast ocean of Bellociana (one-hundred fifty-three published books, by the careful count of bibliographer Patrick Cahill; hundreds upon hundreds of essays; countless miscellanea) the remark in the preface of this book that Belloc was "the

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greatest writer of his day" will not seem extreme. To those who do not read Belloc, it will seem intolerable. But no matter. This book is unique, and immensely worth reading, precisely because it is not about the writer, but about the man. J. B. Morton, "Beachcomber" of London's *Daily Express,* has done what has been hungrily waited for these past two decades: he has sketched an intimate portrait, based on thirty years of close, personal friendship, of the man whose literary achievement—the snobs notwithstanding—borders on the incredible.

What emerges is what one half suspected: an even more incredible man. Writers are, God be praised, usually not as bad as their books. In the case of Belloc there was no telling, for his classic sense of personal privacy and modesty (which had nothing to do with all the shouting and boasting) kept the real man, the inner personality, out of print. What was there was stimulating. But one deduced there must be a great deal more.

Mr. Morton has done what no one else has done in satisfying length and detail: he has introduced that personality. It is a towering one. It is out-sized. It will surprise you. The book proves what perhaps needed proving to those who ought to read more of him: that in the best sense, indeed in the Christian sense, of that much over-worked and ill-used phrase, Hilaire Belloc was a *great* man.

REVIEWERS

William V. Shannon, co-author of *The Truman Merry-Go-Round* and Washington correspondent for the New York *Post*, contributes frequently to The Commonweal.

Frederick D. Wilhelmsen, author of *Hilaire Belloc: No Alienated Man*, is a member of the philosophy faculty at Santa Clara.

Father Robert Paul Mohan, S.S. is on the philosophy faculty at the Catholic University of America.

John A. Lynch, poet and short-story writer, has written for a number of magazines, including *Today* and *The Antioch Review*.

J. L. Maddux, a former lecturer in philosophy, has recently returned from study in Europe.

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